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ABSTRACT

This document provides a rationale for a company to install a workplace skills program and suggestions for finding help in implementing such a program. Topics covered include the following: (1) changing literacy standards; (2) the changing work force and high performance workplaces; (3) cost of hiring new employees versus training current employees; (4) determining whether a workplace skills partnership help a company and whether a company needs a skills program; (5) benefits of a workplace skills program to the company and to the employees; (6) what the National Workplace Skills Demonstration Project can provide to a company; (7) workplace skills program options; (8) contributions a company can make to a workplace skills partnership; (9) deciding if a workplace skills program would be beneficial; (10) estimating skill gaps and company needs; and (11) the skills included in the report of the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) (KC)

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ED 391 096

Does Your Company Need A Workplace Skills Program?

Prepared through a

National Workplace Literacy Demonstration Project

Funded by the U.S. Department of Education
in partnership with:
Pellissippi State Technical Community College
Roane State Community College
Roane County Textile Industries
Levi Strauss and Company
United Garment Workers of America

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What Is Happening To Our Workplaces?

Our Literacy Standards Are Changing

Our Workforce Is Changing

High Performance Models Are Growing

The Cost Of Hiring Is Growing

Our Literacy Standards Are Changing!

100 years ago - Literacy was defined as being able to write your name.

1930 - The Civilian Conservation Corps defined functional literacy as 3 or more years of schooling.

1936 - The military defined literacy for recruits as 4th grade level.

1947 - The Census Bureau defined functional literacy as 5 or more years of schooling.

1952 - The Census Bureau raised the literacy level to 6 or more years of schooling.

1960 - The U.S. Office of Education defined 8th grade as the literacy standard.

Today - Most operational manuals are written on the 11-12th grade reading level. A high school completion level is needed for functional literacy.

Source: Adult Literacy and New Technologies: Tools for a Lifetime, Published by the Office of Technology Assessment, U.S. Congress, 1993 .

Our Workforce Is Changing!

By the year 2000

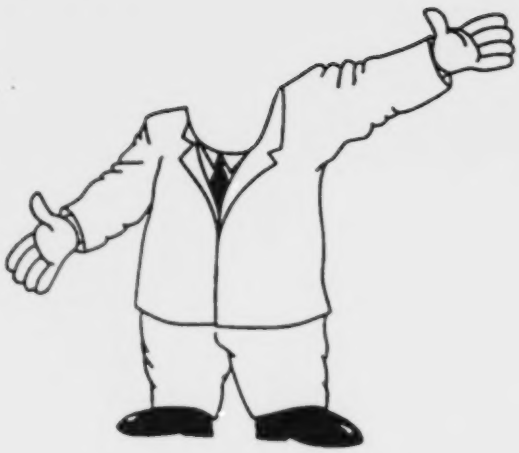
The average worker will be 39 years old (today - 36)

16% of the workforce will come from people under age 25 (today - 20%)

22% of the workforce will come from non-English speaking immigrants (today 7%).

75-80% of tomorrow's workers are in the workforce today.

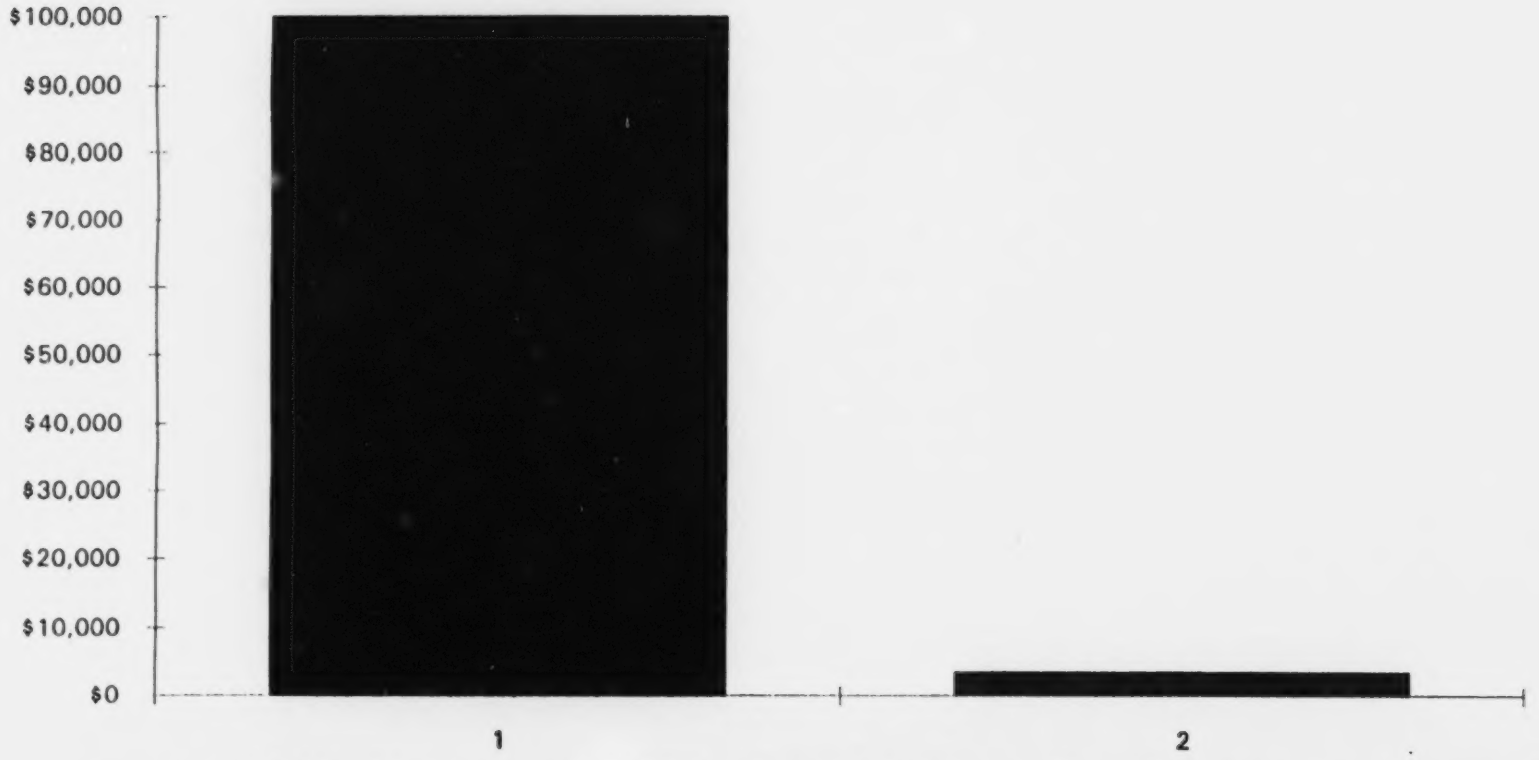
High Performance Models Are Growing!



CHARACTERISTICS OF TODAY'S AND TOMORROW'S WORKPLACE[1]	
TRADITIONAL MODEL	**HIGH PERFORMANCE MODEL**
STRATEGY	
• mass production	• flexible production
• long production runs	• customized production
• centralized control	• decentralized control
PRODUCTION	
• fixed automation	• flexible automation
• end-of-line quality control	• on-line quality control
• fragmentation of tasks	• work teams, multi-skilled workers
• authority vested in supervisor	• authority delegated to worker
HIRING AND HUMAN RESOURCES	
• labor-management confrontation	• labor-management cooperation
• minimal qualifications accepted	• screening for basic skills abilities
• workers as a cost	• workforce as an investment
JOB LADDERS	
• internal labor market	• limited internal labor market
• advancement by seniority	• advancement by certified skills
TRAINING	
• minimal for production workers	• training sessions for everyone
• specialized for craft workers	• broader skills sought

[1]Source: "Competing in the New International Economy." Washington: Office of Technology Assessment, 1990.

Average Cost of Locating/Hiring/Training 10 New Employees Vs. Cost of Training 10 Current Employees



New hires = $100,000 Existing employees = $3,500 Source: Workplace Basics: The Skills Employers Want. Carnevale, Gainer, & Meltzer, Americal Society for Training and Development (ASTD)

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Can A Workplace Skills Partnership Help Your Company?

Does Your Company Need A Workplace Skills Program?

- Is your company changing from single work stations to team production?
- Is your company changing quality assessment methods?
- Is your company increasing customized services?
- Is your company decreasing product delivery time (just-in-time delivery)?
- Are employees making decisions once made by management?
- Is your company installing new technology (computerized machinery)?
- Is your company expecting changes in regulatory standards (ISO 9000, company guidelines, federal regulations)?
- Is your company expecting changes in the number or composition of your workforce (increases, decreases, turn-over)?
- Are your company's employees having difficulty filling out forms, reading and writing memos, understanding manuals, calculating production, reading graphs/tables, or working together as a team?
- Is your company looking for a benefit that would help your employees prepare for tomorrow's workforce while increasing their production and company loyalty?

What Are The Benefits Of A Workplace Skills Program To . . .

Your Company . . .

- **Higher employee skills (basic academics, adaptability, communication, problem-solving, teamwork, decision making, organizational effectiveness)**
- **Better employee ability to effectively use new equipment**
- **Better safety (fewer accidents, reduced workman's compensation)**
- **Higher quality**
- **Higher production and efficiency (less waste of time and materials)**
- **Shorter product cycle (turn around time)**
- **Greater opportunity to promote from within**
- **Greater employee dedication (reduced tardiness and absenteeism, less employee turnover)**
- **Higher morale (less hostility/conflict in workplace))**

Your employees . . .

- **Better opportunity for skill mastery (individualized, adult centered learning provided in supportive environment)**
- **Better basic skills (academic and workplace)**
- **Greater preparation for attainment of educational goals (job certification, GED, preparation for technical or college courses)**
- **Better job performance and opportunity for promotion within plant**
- **Better self-confidence/ability (transfer of skills - confidence/ability to become more active in community, assist children with school work, handle family financial matters)**
- **Improved company loyalty**

What Will The National Workplace Skills Demonstration Project Provide To Your Company?

Pellissippi State Technical Community College and Roane State Community College will provide:

- Project administration
- Coordinator/instructors (employment and supervision)
- Literacy job task analysis
- Employee assessment
- Coordination of activities with plant management and/or education committees
- Curriculum development
- Educational instruction
- Evaluation of project to assure achievement of goals and objectives

		Workplace Skills Program Options				
Program Description	Curriculum	Literacy Job Task Analysis	Literacy Needs	Minimal Company Incentives	Expected Participants	Recommendations
Level 1 - Basic program	General workplace skills program based on CASAS, SCANS, ASTD competencies	none	Minimal - literacy needs frequently related to employment and benefit forms rather than performance of work - companies normally have traditional management systems and individual work stations	Generally voluntary program with recognition of employees' accomplishments through certificates and receptions	Self-motivated for job advancement, GED, or personal improvement - minimal barriers to attending classes after work hours	Recommended for small companies with minimal current literacy needs that would like to: (1) provide education as an employee benefit (2) prepare for anticipated changes in management style or technology
Level 2 - Modified program	General workplace skills program with some customized modules	Abbreviated task analysis (review of materials, interviews with employees and management)	Some literacy needs (team work, reading of directions, basic math, communications)	Strong company support, some incentives (T shirts, certificates, banquets)	Self-motivated employees plus those who respond to management and peer support and encouragement	Recommended for small-medium companies who (1) have identified skill gaps, (2) predict expanded literacy needs (new technology, high performance management), or (3) wish to phase in a larger program
Level 3 - Customized program	Customized workplace skills program for specific plant needs	Literacy job task analysis completed in order to identify curriculum needs	Specific literacy needs correlated to plant performance goals	Work release time, shared work release/employee time, paid after work classes, cash bonus for skill level change or class completion, job promotion or security associated with skill level	Wider range of participants (self-motivated to low skilled with educational barriers) - this level attracts the highest percentage of participants	Recommended for high performance companies that would like to incorporate permanent skills programs into their plants

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What Are Some Contributions Your Company Could Make To A Workplace Skills Partnership?

- Management support in program development
  - Developmental meetings
  - Orientation of educational providers to the workplace
- Marketing/recruitment support
  - Orientation meetings for management
  - Orientation meetings for employees
- Program integration support
  - Coordination with training/human resource department
  - Inclusion of program in new hire orientations
  - Educational support through company policies or mission statements
- Liaison to work with literacy provider
- Release time for Employee Educational Team meetings/activities
- Space for Learning Center
- Funding
  - Instructional materials and supplies
  - Program support
- Instructional equipment
  - Computers
  - VCRs
- Office supplies and copying services
- Incentives for employee participation in instruction
  - Release time
  - Shared employee/company time
  - Bonus for class completion or skill level change
- Employee recognition ceremonies/certificates

Do You Need Help Deciding Whether You Need A Workplace Skills Program?

If you already know whether your company needs a workplace skills program, omit the following surveys.

If you would like some help in estimating whether you need a program, two surveys are attached ("Estimating Skill Gaps" and "National Workplace Skills Demonstration Project Management Survey.") Select either one of the surveys. Both are designed to help you estimate your need for a program.

If you decide to begin a program, your educational partnership can provide a literacy job task analysis and an employee assessment to identify specific needs.

Estimating Skill Gaps

Source: Based on the "Basic Skills Worksheet" from A Workforce Literacy Resource Guide prepared by the Birmingham Area Chamber of Commerce with the Literacy (1992).

When employees' skills do not match the skill levels needed to do the job, a skill gap results. For a quick estimate of skill gaps in your company, compare the skills needed to the skill levels of the employees on the job.

Step 1 - Identify the basic skills needed for the job. The skills listed below were identified by the American Society for Training and Development as those most wanted by employers.

Job Classification _____

Skills Needed	Importance	x	Ability	=	Skills Gap
Ability to learn		x		=	
Reading comprehension		x		=	
Skills Needed		x		=	
Ability to learn		x		=	
Listening/oral communication		x		=	
Problem solving/creative thinking		x		=	
Motivation/self esteem		x		=	
Interpersonal skills/teamwork		x		=	
Leadership/organizational effectiveness		x		=	
Other		x		=	

Step 2 - Estimate the importance of each skill for that job. Record the estimate in the chart above.

Low importance	0
Moderate importance	1
High importance	2
Critical importance	3

Step 3 - Estimate employees' ability in each area. Record the estimate in the chart above.

Exceptional skill	1
Capable	2
Uncertain	3
Incapable	4

Step 4 - Multiply the importance by the ability to calculate the skills gap.

0	Minimal concern
1-2	Caution - consider modifying the workplace
3-4	Concern - encourage self improvement
4-6	Greater concern - recommend partnership with workplace education provider
6-9	Strong concern - recommend ongoing workplace education program

National Workplace Skills Demonstration Project Management Survey - Company Needs

Company Name _____ Date _____

1. Please describe your company's product(s) or service(s).

_____
_____
_____

2. Briefly describe the categories of jobs in your company that would benefit from basic skills education. Please estimate the number of employees in each category. (Example: sewing machine operators, fork lift operators, packagers . . .)

_____
_____
_____
_____

3. Please list your company's work-shift times with an estimate of the number of employees on each shift.

_____
_____

4. Please fill in the following demographic and educational information:

a. Number of males ____ females ____

b. Age Categories
18-30 ____; 31-40 ___; 41-50 ___; 51-60 ___; 61 and over ___

c. Educational Levels - Record the highest grade completed for each employee.
0-6th ____; 7-9th ____; 10-12th ____; Above 12th grade ____

d. List any other employee characteristics that would influence an educational program. (For example, do you have employees that need English-as-a-second-language training?)

_____
_____

5. Are there specific areas that employees need literacy training in order to improve their work performance?

Reading forms and memos	____
Filling out forms	____
Writing memos or short messages	____
Following written or spoken directions	____
Communicating with employees/management	____
Participating in meetings	____
Calculating payroll/production information	____
Reading graphs/tables	____
Measuring ingredients/distances	____
Other _____	

6. Do you expect workplace changes during the next year that will require skill increases?

New management systems (team/quality)	____
Advanced technology (computerized machinery)	____
Production or regulatory standard changes (ISO 9000, company guidelines, regulations)	____
Employee number changes (increases, decreases, turn-over)	____
Other _____	

7. Please list any other ideas or needs for basic skills that you would like to have provided for your employees.

_____

_____

_____

8. If you are primarily interested in general skills, a listing of the skills identified in the SCANS report is attached. If you have priorities for instruction in any of the SCANS skills, please list them.

_____

_____

What Specific Skills Are Included In A Program?

The following pages contain a list of the workplace skills identified by the government and the American Society for Training and Development.

The Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills

A Three-Part Foundation

Basic Skills

A. **Reading** - locates, understands, and interprets written information in prose and in documents such as manuals, graphs, and schedule

B. **Writing** - communicates thoughts, ideas, information, and messages in writing; and creates documents such as letters, directions, manuals, reports, graphs, and flow charts

C. **Arithmetic/Mathematics** - performs basic computations and approaches practical problems by choosing appropriately from a variety of mathematical techniques

D. **Listening** - receives, attends to, interprets, and responds to verbal messages and other cues

E. **Speaking** - organizes ideas and communicates orally

Thinking Skills

A. **Creative Thinking** - generates new ideas

B. **Decision Making** - specifies goals and constraints, generates alternatives, considers risks and evaluates and chooses best alternative

C. **Problem Solving** - recognizes problems and devises and implements plan of action

D. **Seeing Things in the Mind's Eye** - organizes and processes symbols, pictures, graphs, objects, and other information

E. **Knowing How to Learn** - uses efficient learning techniques to acquire and apply new knowledge and skills

F. **Reasoning** - discovers a rule or principle underlying the relationship between two or more objects and applies it when solving a problem

Personal Qualities

A. **Responsibility** - exerts a high level of effort and preseveres towards goal attainment

B. **Self-Esteem** - believes in own self-worth and maintains a positive view of self

C. **Sociability** - demonstrates understanding, friendliness, adaptability, empathy, and politeness in group settings

D. **Self-Management** - assesses self accurately, sets personal goals, monitors progress, and exhibits self-control

E. **Integrity/Honesty** - chooses ethical courses of action

Source: The information above was taken directly from Learning a Living: A Blueprint for High Performance - A Scans Report for America 2000 prepared in 1992 by the U. S. Department of Labor , William E. Brock, Chairman

Five Competencies

Resources

A. **Time** - selects goal-relevant activities, ranks them, allocates time, and prepares and follows schedules

B. **Money** - uses or prepares budgets, makes forecasts, keeps records, and makes adjustments to meet objectives

C. **Material and Facilities** - acquires, stores, allocates, and uses materials or space efficiently

D. **Human Resources** - assesses skills and distributes work accordingly, evaluates performance and provides feedback

Interpersonal

A. **Participates as Member of a Team** - contributes to group effort

B. **Teaches Others New Skills**

C. **Serves Clients/Customers** - works to satisfy customers' expectations

D. **Exercises Leadership** - communicates ideas to justify position, persuades and convinces others, responsibly challenges existing procedures and policies

E. **Negotiates** - works toward agreements involving exchange of resources, resolves divergent interests

F. **Works with Diversity** - works well with men and women from diverse backgrounds

Information

A. **Acquires and Evaluates Information**

B. **Organizes and Maintains Information**

C. **Interprets and Communicates Information**

D. **Uses Computers to Process Information**

Systems

A. **Understands Systems** - knows how social, organizational, and technological systems work and operates effectively with them

B. **Monitors and Corrects Performance** - distinguishes trends, predicts impacts on system operations, diagnoses deviations in systems' performance and corrects malfunctions

C. **Improves or Designs Systems** - suggests modifications to existing systems and develops new or alternative systems to improve performance

Technology

A. **Selects Technology** - chooses procedures, tools or equipment including computers and related technologies

B. **Applies Technology to Task** - understands overall intent and proper procedures for setup and operation of equipment

C. **Maintains and Troubleshoots Equipment** - Prevents, identifies, or solves problems with equipment, including computers and other technologies

The Skills Employers Want

Source: Workplace Basics Training Manual by Anthony P. Carnevale, Leila J. Gainer, & Ann S. Meltzer, publication of the American Society for Training and Development, Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1990.

Foundation Skills: Learning How to Learn

Competence: Reading, Writing, and Computation

Communications: Listening and Oral Communication

Adaptability: Creative Thinking and Problem Solving

Personal Management: Self-Esteem, Motivation and Goal Setting, Employability and Career Development

Group Effectiveness: Interpersonal Skills, Negotiation, Teamwork

Influence: Organizational Effectiveness and Leadership